

**"We've been rolling out the red carpet to foreign nations at the expense of the American worker for decades. It is more than unfortunate and it needs to end."**

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee today put out the following statement as House Ways and Means Committee held a mock mark-up on three flawed Bush-era trade agreements with South Korea, Panama and Colombia:

"We would all be wise to remember that free trade agreements have been bad news for the American worker in the past. Unfortunately that's not stopping this Republican Congress from plowing ahead," said Slaughter. "Instead the Ways and Means Committee is pushing through three Bush-era agreements with South Korea, Colombia, and Panama, while ignoring the fundamental problems with these agreements, including market access problems with South Korea and the human rights atrocities in Colombia.

"For years, I have encouraged Administrations to write trade agreements that provide American workers with an opportunity to compete on a level playing field. A sound trade policy would create opportunities for new jobs and grow the economy. We can't just talk about making goods in America, we have to make sure a fair market exists for our goods to be sold abroad. Instead we've been rolling out the red carpet to foreign nations at the expense of the American worker for decades. It is more than unfortunate and it needs to end."

She has authored the Reciprocal Market Access Act, H.R.1749, bipartisan legislation which instructs U.S. trade negotiators to eliminate foreign market barriers before reducing U.S. tariffs and provide enforcement authority to reinstate the tariff if the foreign government does not honor its commitment to remove its barriers. This legislation would also instruct the International Trade Commission to conduct an assessment of the impact of a prospective trade agreement on market opportunities and barriers for U.S. products or services that will be impacted by the trade agreement.

"We've spent millions of dollars since World War II rebuilding nations abroad, including Korea and now, if these trade agreements were ratified, we'd give it all away to sell some cars," said Slaughter. "That's not good enough. The U.S. is already the most open market in the global economy but current trading laws do not require the same level of openness from our trading partners. Unless other governments provide the same level of access for American companies and remove their regulations that stop U.S. products from being sold in their countries, then the U.S. should not disarm and drop our tariffs."

Slaughter has long been considered one of the leaders on fair trade issues. Representing Upstate New York, she is particularly concerned with the need to rebuild America's manufacturing base.

"We in Upstate New York, have seen a steady stream of jobs leaving our communities – leaving

empty warehouses, a struggling middle class, and a depressed economy behind,” said Slaughter. “Unilateral disarmament in the face of foreign protectionist practices is unacceptable, and we must ensure that our trade policies do not undermine our industries and our workers.” The Reciprocal Market Access Act has been endorsed by both labor and business groups. Summaries of their statements of support are included below along with a summary of the legislation.

### **Summary of the Reciprocal Market Access Act, H.R. 1749**

- The legislation is designed to ensure that our trade negotiations achieve real and meaningful market access for our producers.
- Authority to receive or eliminate tariffs in trade agreements is tied to achieving meaningful market access for U.S. domestic producers that have identified and worked with the U.S. government to address those barriers.
- To better ensure meaningful market access, the bill requires that the President provide a certification to the Congress in advance of agreeing to a modification of any existing duty on any product, that sectoral reciprocal market access has been obtained.
- This will enhance the partnership with Congress and achieve reciprocal market access.
- It gives the government the automatic negotiated right to revoke concessions to cut tariffs if our trading partners don't implement the commitments they made to open up their markets.
- This authority, known as “snap back” authority, could be triggered by a private sector or Congressional request. The goal – and the result – will be reciprocal market access for our nation's products.
- Instructs the International Trade Commission to conduct an assessment of the impact of a prospective trade agreement on market opportunities and barriers for U.S. products or services that will be impacted by the trade agreement. This report will be submitted to Congress, USTR, and the Commerce Department no later than 45 days prior to the beginning of negotiations.

### **A Coalition of Support for H.R. 1749**

*Director of Government Affairs AFL-CIO William Samuel*

“The AFL-CIO strongly believes that the U.S. must do more to support domestic job creation and economic growth. Ensuring that U S exports achieve the access promised in our trade deals would go a long way toward achieving that goal. We encourage you to support the Reciprocal Market Access Act and similar efforts to ensure American products and services are not unfairly locked out of foreign markets.”

*Legislative Director of the United Auto Workers Barbara Somson*

“H.R. 1749... would ensure that our trade negotiators achieve real market access for domestic

producers, tie authority to eliminate tariffs in trade agreements to achieving meaningful market access, and give our government the automatic negotiated right to revoke tariff concessions if our trading partners don't implement the commitments they made to open their markets ("snapback" authority)."

*International President of United Steelworkers Leo W. Gerard*

"This bill would support our nation's workforce and strengthen the competitiveness of American industries globally, by significantly increasing the Administration's ability to reduce foreign trade barriers."

*Executive Director of American Manufacturing Trade Action Coalition Augustine Tantillo*

"HR 1749, the Reciprocal Market Access Act, should help to ensure that our trade policy is actually working to open opportunities for American businesses to export goods and services. The "snapback" provisions of your legislation could be a very useful means of ensuring that our trading partners fulfill their commitments to open up their markets to our exports."

*CEO of the Coalition for a Prosperous America Michael C. Stumo*

"Reciprocity is a bedrock international trade principle which has been ignored by U.S. trade negotiators and Congress. Your bill helps re-establish reciprocity by requiring trade negotiators to obtain a reduction or elimination of foreign tariff or non-tariff barriers before agreeing to lower U.S. tariffs."

*International Brotherhood of Teamsters General President James Hoffa*

"(H.R. 1749) will help obtain meaningful market access in emerging markets and will help protect the jobs of U.S. workers."

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